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NOTES

OF A

WINTER TRIP

TO

CUBA AND BACK

BY WAY OF

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

by

John McLennan.

REPRINTED FROM THE MONTREAL GAZETTE.

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PRINTED BY M. LONGMOORE & CO.
Printing House, 67 Great St. James Street.
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THESE Notes extend over that part only of the trip extending from Chicago to Cuba and back to Washington. The intermediate parts of my route are familiar to most Canadians, and my journey over them presented nothing new or worthy of special remark.

J. McL.

MONTREAL, *April*, 1867.

John McLennan of Lancaster P.E.I.

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NOTES ON A

WINTER TRIP TO CUBA AND BACK.

Letter I.

ON BOARD THE STEAMER "LUPPY GULL,"
ON THE MUDDY MISSISSIPPI,
Saturday, Jan. 19, 1867.

There are few of the uncomfortable situations of life but have some component or incidental compensation. In the present case the prospect, merely "looking out," is rather dreary; but then it is a fine time for "looking in," and for sending back an account of one's self. In company with H. and G. I left Chicago on Thursday night at ten o'clock by rail, having had, for the previous twenty-four hours, very cold weather, and being of course glad to leave that locality. The Illinois Central Railway from Chicago to Cairo conveys one over 365 miles of country that is rich in its capacity for producing corn and other cereals, and that covers extensive coal fields, but presents nothing of interest in the way of land-scape scenery. We witnessed, however, a lovely sunrise on the prairie which was warmed up far and near by the return of the "God of day." As we approached Cairo we found the temperature gradually modifying, with very little snow on the ground. At 6½ p. m. on Friday we reached Cairo, where we were besieged by the wordy representatives of several steamers, all "warranted to leave in twenty minutes." Having made a survey we transferred ourselves and our "plunder" to the "Luppy Gull," which is a large steamer with vast deck room for freight, an extensive saloon

aloft, and such feeding appliances as are common in thes parts ; and we have the prospect of being able to fi ourselves at regular intervals with plain but tolerably hones food. We left Cairo only at noon to day. If that moder city ever comes to greatness, it must overcome seriou natural difficulties ; its dreary expanse of mud and sand, a it stretches into the fork of the Mississippi and the Ohi rivers, is unbroken by any glimpse of country, or indeed o and living growth. Apart from the general feature o magnificence, the appearance of land and water is rather dismal. The Father of Waters presents the same indication as many of the bipeds here—that of a plentiful lack of clean water to wash withal. In fact the old gentleman appears as if he had kept but indifferently good hours lately, and had been very negligent of his toilet. Approaching Columbus (about 30 miles from Cairo) we got fairly packed in ice, the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio at Cairo havingcarried it down in too great volume for the passage of a narrow gorge at this point. By the consumption, however, of much fuel, our vessel "worried" through, and the night being dark, we are lying over at Hickman, Ky., about 50 miles on our voyage.

Sunday, Jan. 20.

We left soon after daylight, and have been for the last two hours (now 11 a. m.) fast to a tree on the Missouri shore, while the swarm of colored men that form the crew of the steamer are engaged, under the hoarse direction of the mate, in tumbling firewood down the cliff of clay, and carrying it on board on their backs. A soft snow is falling, and it is what sailors call "dirty weather." The woods about New Madrid, Mo., were scenes of fierce contest during the war, and there was also some fighting in the neighbourhood of Hickm..n. In the former we noticed some broken trees, and in the latter place some ruins of earthworks that were

once objects of interest to the contending armies. We were so fortunate as to meet some fellow-passengers who are disposed to make themselves agreeable, and to tell us what they know of the route and the local history, and we find the advantage of improving our opportunities by returning the courtesy.

Monday, Jan. 21, 4 P. M.

We pulled up beside a woodpile last night, leaving at daylight this morning; we have a bright sun and a fine day, but somewhat windy, and a periodical retreat from the deck to the stove is rather a pleasant change. We have made steady progress, making but one halt to land a passenger, and are now within fifty miles of Memphis. We have passed a few cotton plantations this afternoon, but they are not, apparently, in thriving circumstances. We made the acquaintance of a Jeff. Davis democrat from Mississippi, who freely expressed sentiments that appeared to meet the ready approval of many of his less demonstrative fellow travellers. Our friend appeared to be a man of a single mind—a very ideal of *loyalty*. He told us that he had fought and bled, and almost died for his State—that he had done so because it was his native State—that he came of a race that was never afraid to fight, and he told us, with some emphasis, that if he had been a citizen of a much *warmer* State than Mississippi, he should have fought for the accredited ruler of that place. He bore with him in a shattered hand and in every line and feature of his fine form and rather worn but handsome face the proofs of his sincerity. He told us that he had been in St. Louis to obtain "freedmen" to work his plantation, and acquiesced (as we find most men do) in the great fact that the negro is free for ever, but he complains that the Freedmen's Bureau is not a judicious arbiter between the master and the labourer, and maintains the right of the community to adopt such

municipal laws, applicable alike to whites and blacks, as may secure the economical application of the country's industry —and he objects decidedly to the invasion of the "Sacred Soil" by the Yankee. There is of course much leisure in this journey and room for second thoughts, and opportunity to recur to this subject—which is the one of universal interest, and I shall probably return to it. We passed Fort Pillow this afternoon. It presents nothing more than a riddled bank of clay.

MEMPHIS, Tuesday, Jan. 22.

We arrived here at 9 p. m. last night, and indulged in such a full ablution and toilet as cannot be readily accomplished on a Mississippi steamer, and are to-day expanding in the fine sunlight, unrestrained by overcoats or fur caps.

The horse chestnuts and magnolias, in richest green, and the colony of grey squirrels, give a cheerful appearance to a well appointed square in the heart of the city. The levee is covered with what appeared to us to be a large number of bales of cotton; but we were told by the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, which Chamber we found in the sole occupation of that officer, that trade was in so low a condition that there were no regular meetings "on 'change"—that the country is steeped in debt, labor unsettled, and a great lack of capital wherewith to tide over the transition period from the chaos of war to the prosperity that can only come with the restoration of labor to its proper uses.

Letter II.

"Texas," Thursday, Jan. 24th.

The upper deck (a third story) was first added upon the Mississippi steamers about the time that the State of Texas was annexed to the Union—hence the common application of the name. The fitness of the union has been questioned in the case of the State; the added deck fits admirably, and we find it to-day the most pleasant basking place in which to jot our pencil marks for the information of our friends. We left Memphis between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, and having made about fifteen miles, stuck fast upon a *bar*. We are drawing $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water, and the river is unusually low for the season. The steamer was promptly swung round with the current and all available steam applied to get her off, but in vain. The necessaries of life were, however, on board; and during the morning we saw, by practical application, the use of two tall trunks of trees that stood erect on the forward deck. They were planted in the shoal, and used as levers to lift the bow of the vessel, when about 3 p.m., by the persevering use of the paddles, we got afloat again, and fortunately without any damage to detain us longer. About $6\frac{1}{2}$ p.m. we are again pulled up by the darkness, having made but 60 or 70 miles from Memphis. This morning opened warm, and all on board are aglow with its freshness. The colony of fowls (hens, geese, ducks and turkies) that in their coops fill up all available space outside the rails on each deck and on top of the paddle boxes, lift up their pipes in cheery unconsciousness that they are borne along (all too slowly for their owners) to the place where those pipes are to be wrung. The fowl merchants, whose faces grew grave with delay and bad weather, now

relax with hopes of a speedy market and much profit, and exult in the probable delay in ice, higher up stream, of their coming competitors. The four hundred mules that had danced and kicked rather impatiently as the cold water washed up on them over the slight bulwark and through the uncaulked deck, become genial and kindly under the rays of the sun. These useful animals are raised in the North-Western States, and exported for sale and use in the South, where from their greater power of endurance they are preferable to horses for field work, and for drays and street cars; they vary much in size and figure, and in colour, and are said to be worth in the Southern States from $175 to $200 each.

We are this morning entirely clear of ice, which had kept a constant rasping against the sides of our vessel to this time. There is yet very little cultivation or improvement visible, and where, here and there, a woodman has erected his hut to carry on the business of providing firewood for the passing steamers he has scarcely improved the scene. We "rounded to" (the usual process in landing, owing to the rapidity of the river) this morning at the city of Helena, Arkansas. A range of low hills rising behind the city with here and there a modest villa in a garden, together with two or three church spires, all in the sunlight, gave a pleasing prospect in the distance; but as we neared the landing place, the picture melted away. The motley congregation of poor whites, and coloured freedmen, and rawboned mules, with some few bales of cotton that formed the foreground to a straggling range of wooden general stores and tin shops —all combined—presented a dreary lot. A lanky youth reclining in a waggon behind a mule replied to our inquiry if there were Union men here that he "guessed they were mostly Jeff. Davis boys about these parts." We were told that cotton was worth about 24 cents a pound, and decided that cotton must be "king," as it was, evidently more money

than the rest of the lot would fetch in the world's markets. The sense of dearincss in the case of these poor Helenists is increased by the fact that the bluff on which their city is built is underlaid by a vein of quicksand, and we actually saw lying at the water's edge a portion of the *debris* of the chief Hotel of the place which had dropped into the Mississippi within the last ten days. Here landed one of the Society of Friends, who had been our companion from Cairo, and from whom we gathered some valuable information. Our friend is a man of much experience and superior intelligence; a native of Lancashire, in England, who had emigrated early in life to New York, where he had acquired a competent provision for life (in the cutlerly trade,) whereupon he retired to Iowa with his family to follow the peaceful life of a farmer. Being yet hearty and vigorous, though well advanced in years, he had joined with some members of his society to carry on an experiment in planting cotton in Arkansas, and throughout last year lived on a large plantation there in perfect isolation from white mankind, surrounded only by the negroes whom he employed. He stated that he had given an interest in the work to such of the negroes as exhibited any qualification for overseers or sub-tenants; that he found the number very small, however, that could be impressed with a sense of the advantages of application, and at the same time could appreciate the fair dealing necessary to the success of a "contracting party;" he stated, however, that one of the men so engaged had earned a sum of three thousand dollars. He mentioned as one great obstacle to the improvement of the race in their free state the want of common human sympathy with their kind. He hopes, however, for the restoration of this natural feeling to a generation that is trained up free. The crop of cotton, he tells us, has been much better in Arkansas than on the east side of the Mississippi. He tells us that he has taken on lease, on favourable terms for the coming year, a plantation

of 1200 acres, which he has apportioned in lots at the same rental to the negroes whom he had employed last year, charging them only a commission for advances and for the sale of their crop.

Near Helena we passed an extensive cotton field, on which the negroes were busy picking the precious staple. We understand that the cause of the delay (and loss and injury to the fibre) was the difficulty so generally prevalent throughout last season of obtaining labour—a cause that has probably had much to do with the short aggregate crop. This is a subject of which we hear a good deal, and on which I may, perhaps, be able to speak more intelligently as we advance further.

The wild cane begins to show in green tufts in the underwood, and the far extending forests of cotton wood are now hung with festoons of moss—dry and dreary, and suggestive of dreamland.

We stopped at a trading place this p.m., to discharge a few barrels of meal, and H., being enterprising and adventurous, climbed up the steep bank and plucked a wild rose bush, in fine growth, from the ruins of a homestead that had apparently been sacrificed by the red hand of war. A few green bushes and some stumps of fence posts remain to tell the sad but too common story of desolation.

We pass here and there, bleaching on the sand-bars, the wheel or the timbers of a hull, or some other skeleton of a steamer that has succumbed to fire or steam or snag. This last enemy is supplied for the most part from the extensive land slides that are constantly occuring, when several acres at a fall drop into the river, presenting, as we noticed in some cases, a surface of forest, arable, or glebe land yet unbroken and not fully submerged. The bottom and banks of the Mississippi appear to be constantly shifting, and the process of decrease or attraction constantly in progress on one bank and the other respectively, whilst shoals are formed

so rapidly and unaccountably that the keenest eyed pilot cannot always keep track of them.

The universal cotton-wood takes root in these mud banks as soon as they rise above low water mark, and stretches of forest are to be seen in every stage of growth, from the reedy sappling to the sturdy tree. The timber appears to be of little value—it is soft, short-grained, and light when dry, and in this latter state is much used for steamboat fuel. Owing to the peculiar difficulties of the navigation, the profession of piloting is an important one, and we are told that the men employed in this capacity on the steamers receive a salary of about two hundred and fifty dollars per month. Men of important qualifications are also required for masters, mates, and engineers. The business generally is profitable, but wear and tear in men and other material is great.

Letter III.

Friday, Jan. 25.

Last evening we enjoyed the recreation common to passengers on the Mississippi—a quadrille in the saloon, a coloured artist having been improvised to supply the music. During the night we added to our experience breaking a *snag*, fortunately, however, without injury to the vessel. The danger in encountering this enemy is slight when going with the stream; the heavy roots of the tree usually become imbedded in the bottom of the river, when the trunk leans down stream, inclining till the top lies at the surface of the water. In this form the contact of a vessel ascending the stream is, of course, dangerous, whereas in descending the vessel passes over, suffering injury only when there is lack of room from shallow water. A tree lying in the stream, with the extreme top just under the surface of the water, is called a "sawyer;" it is, of course, most dangerous. We experienced also a breeze of wind so lively that we lay to for a while, and a smart shower of rain; this morning opened bright and somewhat fresh.

To-day, we are passing a number of cotton plantations that had evidently been places of mark before the war. Some of the dwellings remain undisturbed—neat, old-fashioned wooden houses, enclosed in thickly-planted gardens and hedges, with the village of negro residences adjoining. The latter are, for the most part (where yet standing), clean, white-washed and trim-looking. The overseer's residence is generally a half way house, both in locality and quality. A great number of the places of these homesteads present now but half-ruined chimnies, sad memorials of their former existence and of the manner of their destruction. A young

gentleman on board, who had served on a gunboat during the war, told us that the homesteads were destroyed only when hostile demonstrations were made. It is evident that hostile feeling must have been very common. Our steamer made delivery of supplies at several places to-day—meal, corn, pork, hay, etc. It appears to be the universal practice, where cotton grows, to give up the lands entirely to its cultivation, as being so much more profitable than the growing of breadstuffs. The effect must reduce the planter sometimes to inconvenience when, as at the present time, boats are few on the river, and landing in many places inconvenient; whilst he is at all times, I should think, in an unpleasant state of dependence for these simple necessaries of life. We landed on an estate in a good state of preservation, where we walked up to the levee—the bulwark formed to keep out the river in its spring gambols. It appears strange to the traveller who has toiled up a steep bank from the deck of the steamer, that these barriers should ever be necessary; but the variations in the river are very great, and these guards are indispensable to the occupant of the ground. They are a work of much labour, their permanence and efficiency being in proportion to the breadth and height and compactness of their formation; that upon which we stood was about six feet high, with a good carriage road on top, and an easy, sloping, grassy bank on each side. The levee is, of course, built at some distance from the present bed of the river; but, from the constant encroachment of the river upon its banks, it is very necessary to guard the levees with watchful care, so that the first breach may be mended, and with additional resisting power. But it is one of the many results of the state of war, that vast breaches have been made, and have gone on increasing without any effort to stay or to repair them; and it is apparent that during two years of peace little has been done to stop the continuous process of ruin and decay. It is difficult, indeed, to discover so far

any of the ordinary and traditional fruits of peace, and the conviction forces itself that the work of recuperation, obstructed as it is by so many social and political difficulties, must be slow and painful.

Saturday, Jan. 26.

We left Vicksburg at 7½ o'clock this morning, under a cold "Nor'-wester" and a bright sun. I had but a cold and hurried view (from "Texas") of that city of long and heavy beleaguerment. It is very prettily situated, on a series of conical hills rising abrubtly from the Mississippi, and descending more leisurely towards the Big Black river in rear. For this latter information I am indebted to the enterprise of H. & G. (warm blooded young fellows) who ascended the hills and made a survey at four o'clock of the morning by fine mornlight. They report well paved streets and some fine villas beyond the tops of the "ant hills." On the peaks of these latter stand a few houses—survivors of the first settlement probably,—in magnificent elevation above the world and its vanities: they appear to have escaped even such vanities as shot and shell. The river front of the city was less fortunate in this respect and is much dilapidated. It is a city of ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, and must have been crowded during the siege.

We passed to-day the Davis estate (property of Joseph, brother of Jeff.) said to be the most extensive and valuable in Mississippi. There are some fine buildings to be seen, but at some distance from the river. On one part of the estate we saw quite a colony of dwellings, which we were told were the property of the Freedmen's Bureau, which has made a lodgment here. On the right bank of the river we noticed what had once been a very fine plantation lying in ruins, no attempt having been made to re-occupy it. Reached Natchez about 7 o'clock p. m.; this city is said to occupy one of the finest situations on the river. We saw it only by

star and gas light. We breasted the levee and the winding ascent to the city, said to be about 200 feet, and resembling somewhat the process of getting up hill at Quebec. We noticed, however, by such light as we enjoyed that (differing from our ancient capital) as we ascended, there lay beneath us a fine growth of trees on the face of the hill, that must be a pleasing feature when in full view and in full bloom. The city was very quiet, many of the places of business being closed, and the retail shops that were open but little frequented; the streets were clean and well paved, and the buildings substantial. We looked into a hotel, upon the hospitable invitation of the porter, who stood smiling from the steps. The house was quiet, clean, and like a place to stop at. In the neat reception room a few newspapers lay on the table, and a solitary traveller sat near the cheerful fire in the grate. To our remarks on the general lack of activity in the cities on the river, he simply replied,—in words that have been frequently repeated,—that this section of country must soon become a wilderness unless some remedy were found for the existing disorder. We passed a number of neat villa residences and many green trees, though in the darkness we could not distinguish their quality. We passed through a market place well hung with supplies of meat, ready, as we understand is the custom, for an early market on Sunday morning. We passed also more than one church, and rested in the potico of one to hear a fine strain of music, in which the notes of the organ blended with woman's voice in a song of praise, preparatory for the worship of the coming day, and would have gladly rested and worshipped also, but the Mississippi boatmen know little of Divine law or its beneficent influence, and on we speed. Before turning in, however, we visited the steamer "Robert E. Lee," one of the last built, and said to be the very finest on the river ("or elsewhere" probably might be added by a Mississippian). The vessel was all ablaze with light, as was also the levee in

front of her, whilst a sable crowd poured bales of cotton on board, piling them on the bow deck until they reached the level of the top work; 3,500 bales is said to be her ordinary load. Ascending to the grand saloon, which extends nearly to the stern of the vessel, we found its great length gaily fitted up and furnished, and shining in white paint and gold, and silver plate, and every room on board occupied. A large number of ladies and gentlemen were in the saloon, and the usual drawing-room pastime of the Mississippi—a quadrille —was moving to the music of a rather ambitious band. In the barber's saloon a card table occupied an eager crowd, but we saw none of the traditional bowie knives or revolvers.

Letter IV.

New Orleans, January 28, 1867.

When proceeding on board the "Luppy Gull" on Saturday night at Natchez, we encountered one of the mule drovers, a young fellow from Illinois—a farmer's son—who was well up on mules and other cattle, and who had been "around some" generally. We had cultivated his acquaintance for the hearty good humour and intelligence with which he discussed things in the intervals of his attentions to the long-eared ones, and to his violin, for which latter he had quite a talent. He carried a rather pensive air, and the following colloquy, after the manner of Æsopus, took place:

Mr. G. How are the mules doing?

Drover. One of 'em has just died—now lying dead on board.

G. Indeed, how did it happen?

D. Well, the mule fell sick, and the owner of the lot alongside of mine came to me and asked me if I could do anything for a sick mule since he couldn't when I told him that I had a receipt that would cure it, but it had cost me twenty-seven dollars, and I couldn't afford to let him have the good of it for less than ten dollars.

G. And he wouldn't pay that amount, eh?

D. No, hang him! he was meaner than that, for I finally offered to use the remedy if he would pay the cost of the medicine, but he wouldn't even do that.

G. Was nothing attempted to relieve the animal?

D. Yes, when it became very bad I got some oil and things to give, but it was too late; and then when we came to turn it over, I found *my own brand on the critter.*

We were pleased to find that he accepted the moral with his usual good humour,

Yesterday (Sunday) morning early, we left Natchez. We passed during the day the mouth of Red River. Its flow into the Mississippi is accomplished in the grandest solitude —a dense forest of cotton wood covering the entire scene of the confluence. The only animal life present is the flock of wild geese and ducks, that take flight at every beautiful bend of the river; and its "curve and flow" is perpetually changing, so that in the course of a day's progress we move to almost every possible point of the compass. The passenger who lands at the intersecting points to pursue his journey up these vast tributaries (as the White, the Arkansas, and the Red rivers) tells you that his farm is 300 or 700 miles up those streams, and that the fertility of the soil increases as you ascend, which you think hardly possible, —and you get a new idea of the vast extent of land that remains to be possessed. What room is here for the surplus millions of Europe, and for ages to come, and waiting for occupation! Is it not worth the consideration of that friend of the Irish, who has proposed so costly a scheme for supplying them with farms that present no greater quality of productiveness and so much less breadth? We notice, occasionally, the enterprising trader, accompanied by his family and his boxes of goods, landing to wend his way into the interior, that he has, perhaps, never yet explored. The dusky forms of a small band of negroes are also to be seen emerging from the main deck of the vessel, where they have been stowed away high on cotton bales or sacks of corn; they, too, are engaged to labour in these new fields. We halted at the city of "Bayou Sara," which occupies a pretty site on the river bank and (partly) on a ridge rising at a little distance; but the portion nearest the river must have harboured unsoundness, for it was purged with fire. We are now in the land of the sugar cane, and passing occasion-

ally what had been a fine plantation, but they are mostly notable for the chimneys without houses, and the riddled and unroofed sugar houses. These latter having been built of brick, portions of walls as well as chimneys are yet standing. Port Hudson, famous for its defence by the Confederates, (against Banks and Farragut, if I recollect rightly,) presents but a series of barren and uneven clay hills, with a few huts scattered over them. Its immediate neighbourhood is dotted with more than the usual number of chimneys. At nightfall we reached Baton Rouge, formerly the capital of the State of Louisiana, and said to occupy a very fine site, and to be finely built. We could distinguish between us and the star-lit horizon the standing walls, in white stone, of what had been a very fine State House, but which, we were told, had paid the common price of the common hostility to those avenging gunboats. As we descend southward and land at places of more travel and traffic (and at some places that are otherwise deserted) we notice an increasing congregation of negroes (of both sexes and all ages) whom we should suspect of being "vagrants," if that term may be applied to willfully unproductive freedmen.

This morning I rose early to watch for the sunlight and the fine plantations that we were told should increase in number and beauty as we descended into Louisiana. We found the promise partially fulfilled. There is evidence everywhere of the scourge of war; in cane fields where the furrows are grown over with grass and weeds, in dykes where injury has become chronic, in sugar houses unrepaired, and in dwellings even in the neighbourhood of New Orleans, (though not so frequently as higher up the river) deserted and fallen into decay. There are, however, some very fine gardens and in richest green; the hedges and evergreens being apparently sufficient to protect even common vegetables that grow under their shelter. The live-oak, most beautiful of evergreens, is dotted thickly over the landscape with fine

effect. The fields here lie, as far as the eye can reach, flat beneath one's standing place, with only the levee to guard them from overflow. The bed of the river is, however, more extended, and the risk of damage no more than in the fields higher up stream that have a greater present elevation above its bed. The land forming the immediate bank of the Mississippi in the long stretch of 900 miles, from Cairo to Bayou Sara, is only to a very small extent cultivated ; on bluffs where cities are built, and occasionally where these bluffs are extended and fertile, plantations are established. The most common feature is a decline from the river bank into a more or less extended region of swamp, beyond which the land rises and the country is settled. The general impression left on the mind of the traveller is that of a magnificent solitude.

By a wise provision of the authorities of New Orleans (for there appears to be some authority here yet) vessels carrying live stock are made to discharge that portion of their cargo at the stock yards, about five miles above the city landing, and the decks must be washed down before proceeding to the place where men congregate. This process detained us about three hours, during which time of waiting we took a turn ashore. The landing is effected into the midst of a long extending range of stables, in which were numbers of Texan cattle of a very large growth—both cows and bullocks—and mostly in a rather rawboned condition, and in many cases rather untamed. Here were also a number of their drivers, with ponies and cumbrous Mexican saddles, and we witnessed some very clever evolutions of the riders following untamed cattle with a long rope attached to their horns. We walked half way round an extensive garden planted round with a thick belt of orange trees, on which hangs a good deal of fruit, mostly ripe, but some portion in its green state. Within we noticed roses blooming, and oleanders and other flowering plants growing. There

were also cabbages and other vegetables growing in a farther part of the garden, and the grass was green by the wayside. Descending from the stock yards and passing a long line of steamers and sailing vessels floating the flags of many nations, we landed on the levee, which is here a level wharf, built of timber, and ballasted with gravel and of wide extent, and presenting a good deal of activity. The wharf and the streets are rather dirty, from a flutter of snow which has astonished the eyes of the natives from its rarity. We proceed through streets of solid masonry and modest elevation to the St. Louis Hotel, where we have washed and dined in a manner that brings us to a new sense of life, and suggestive of parallels that are unfavourable to the now discarded "Luppy Gull."

Letter V.

New Orleans, Jan. 31st.

The first range of buildings that attracts notice in approaching the levee is the long line of cotton warehouses—cotton presses they are usually called, but the press is only a part of the arrangement, which consists of a walled enclosure of the extent of an ordinary block of buildings, with sheds or stores next the wall, and a large open court or yard in the centre. In this latter part the bales of cotton are turned out and sampled and classified in the full sunlight; from here they are moved forward when ready for shipment to the steam press, which is so constructed and attended that the bale of cotton is rolled into its jaws and pressed into small space and bound with bands of light hoop iron, (ingeniously fastened by a small clasp) in the shortest possible space of time, and turned out from the press upon the dray. The levee has long served as a market place for sugar and corn, and other country produce. The corn is brought down the Mississippi from the North-western States, and goes into consumption in the South. A Merchants' Exchange has lately been established, and some exertion used to transfer the business of buying and selling corn to its daily meeting, and with fair success. The sugar trade is still carried on upon the levee, an extensive portion of which is appropriated for the exclusive use of that trade. The packages of sugar and molasses lie in tiers, long and deep, and the dealers congregate at early morn around them, and about a weigh-house in the middle of the area, and here the day's receipts of the rich food are disposed of. The cotton sales are carried on mostly in Carondelet street, where the shippers congregate. A larger room, and more conveniently

situated than that now occupied, is in course of construction for the Merchants' Exchange, and it is expected that a much larger part of the trade of the city will be initiated within its walls when occupied.

When the cotton crop of the States reached from four to five millions of bales, one-half or more of that quantity found its ways to New Orleans; now the crop is reduced to about one-third of that quantity, and the sugar crop, which was probably all marketed here, is reduced in a greater proportion. Of course, the concentration of this trade established the merchants and bankers of New Orleans as factors and capitalists of this valuable product, and of the owners of the soil, and whilst the stream of production ran freely into the lap of the Crescent City, her busy children were enriched by the toll levied upon the goods consumed as well as upon the crop produced. And the Southern planter always spent his income, and New Orleans was the place of resort for himself and his family. To swell the volume of this traffic, too, everything (or nearly so) was marketed, for the Southern planter produced no food (unless a few vegetables and fruits) nor grew nor manufactured any of these household fabrics and implements, by the supply of which for his own use the owner of the log hut in the North establishes himself in comparative independence of the commercial world; and, what is of more importance, guards himself to some extent againt the accident of famine. The destruction of a great part of this trade during the war, the consequent withdrawal of capital, and the failure to recover and re-establish to any extent during the two years since the proclamation of peace, together with the cessation of the probably large expenditure here during the war, have been cause enough to account for the general complaint that prevails of stagnation in trade. Yet in the face of these discouragements, with the added uncertainty of their political situation, the merchants of New Orleans are not all desponding, but trust rather to

the operation of time and the many advantages of their position and climate and natural facilities of communication, with the great natural wealth of the country, to restore their prosperity. It is but simple justice to the "Rebel States," as they are termed in Congress, to say that while we have failed on the journey from Cairo to New Orleans to discover the first *loyal* resident of the South, (in the sense of loyalty to the party in power) always excepting some who have emigrated there since the war, we hear few expressions of rancorous hostility to the North, but, on the contrary, a general disposition is manifested to accept the changed situation. There is expressed, however, by men of intelligence and apparent honesty of purpose, a very general dissent from the view taken of that situation by the dominant party, and much regret that the fate of their country should be decided, down to the last detail of municipal government, by a Congress of men at Washington, who, however well informed in many respects, have no acquaintance with their large section of country—peculiar in many respects as to climate and productions, and relations to neighbouring countries, as well as in the habits and traditions and history of its people. People here suggest that Washington might profit by a trip to New Orleans, since the latter city is not permitted to initiate the courtesy. And one is reminded how often it happens in common life that parties pass half a life-time "across the way," but in close proximity to each other, perhaps nursing prejudices that are born simply of isolation, when, upon casually finding the key to the great question "Who is my neighbour?" each finds the other, after all their distrust, to be possessed of very good qualities. The burden of dissent appears to be that the country cannot be restored to a state of prosperity without some measure of self-government, and that such government cannot be carried on by negroes without any education whatever, and white men of a nearly similar con-

dition, even if assisted by a few intelligent emigrants from the North, who are without practical knowledge of the country; whilst nearly every native white man of influence or position is disfranchized, and condemned to a life of suffering hostility. It is particularly maintained that the negro who has grown up without the slightest idea of the ordinary relations of social civilized life must be taught by the force of some stringent provision of law that he must work before he can acquire the habit of controlling, with any forethought, his own labour, This view is confirmed by the statement of different parties on the Mississippi and here. Steamers had frequently left the ports during last season, without the cargoes that were ready for loading while swarms of negroes were basking in the sun, but would not work because their bellies were full, and they were free from momentary need. These grave questions, though interesting, have their painful aspect, and it is some relief to turn to a view of the beautiful city. The peculiar situation of the city, lying as it does beneath the ordinary high water-mark of the Mississippi, and drained into canals running by a very slight descent through an extensive swamp into Lake Pont-Chartrain, at a distance of about six miles, has suggested the most rigid provision for securing continued cleanliness: the effect is that the city has many advantages over cities that occupy better natural positions. There are no cellars beneath the houses, and from the spongy nature of the soil, it is found necessary to provide a perfect system of gutters and drains directly from the surface pavement, and every spot that is not planted with tree or flower is paved and regularly flooded. There is consequently a very general freshness resulting from the use of so much water. There is much white marble used in building, and the houses are generally but two or three stories high, and present a pleasing and sort of homely contrast to the buildings in cities farther northwards. Canal

Street, running in a straight line from the levee through the centre of the city, and extending to the City Park, a distance of from two to three miles, is nearly 200 feet wide, with a *boulevard* in the centre planted with trees, and within the centre of this enclosure a railway track, over which a patient mule drags its burden of car and humanity. This street is flanked in its length by a succession of fine shops and villa residences—the former extending over the portion nearest the city proper, and brilliant in their display of wares, and suggestive at once of a gay people, and a people of cultivated taste. We were rather surprised to find that imported goods, as far as our information reached, were quite as cheap as in New York—we thought in some cases rather cheaper. We turned in at the open gate of one of the cemeteries in the city—an extensive enclosure within a high brick wall. The bodies are laid in substantial brick vaults, built, of course, above ground, and there is some display of memorials in stone of the dead, and many bouquets and flowering plants blooming over the corruption that neither brick nor stone can stay. There are several neatly kept small parks in the city, all (and always apparently) in green. We visited Jackson Square, within a few blocks of our hotel, at early morn; it is about twice the size of our Place D'Armes, and is the most perfect of floral gardens. Its rails and walks are solid above the moist earth, and it bears in its centre a fine equestrian statue in bronze of the "Hero of New Orleans" on the base of Massachussets granite. We embellished our button holes with roses by favour of the obliging gardener. There are also oleanders and other flowers in bloom, and the cypress, chestnut, magnolia, japonica and other plants are in fine growth. We noticed also two or three groups of banana trees or plants, which we were told yield abundant fruit in their season, though they are now in the partially yellow leaf of such mild winter as visits them.

Letter VI.

New Orleans, February 1, 1867.

The French element is prominent in the population of this city, and is discoverable in the neat and clean shops and cafés and market places, and in the primitive residences, frequently enclosed by a high wall, or established in a court within the shops and warehouses, and made notable by the partial view of well trimmed tree tops peering over or through these barriers. In the marts of trade and prominent gathering places one meets the men of all nations, and it is quite perceptible that men from the Northern States, who have spent a good part of their lifetime here, have lost their distinguishing national peculiarities, and have assumed the general cosmopolitan manner that prevails and have become attached to the soil. The supremacy of King Cotton in this city as its chief capital, has attracted men from all the manufacturing world, and its position as a large shipping port and commercial city, in close proximity to the rich but often unsettled fields of Texas, Mexico, and Central America, as well as the West India Islands, has established it as the commercial metropolis of the Gulf of Mexico, and here are met the men engaged in trade or adventure with all these parts. Galveston is reached by rail and steamer from here in about twenty-four hours. We are informed upon good authority that the labour question has not been complicated to any extent in Texas, the Freedmen's Bureau not having interfered to any extent, and that the varied productions of that State have been cultivated during the last season much as usual.

With the varied nationality and objects of pursuit, one meets here more variety of opinion than upon the compara-

tively lonely Mississippi. I had been so often told that Sambo wouldn't work, that I had almost come to believe that Sambo couldn't work if he would, without the intervention of a little rough training, (a theory long prevalent with trainers of other colts that are taken green), when I find myself shaken almost to a jelly by an English gentleman ("Burly Briton cotton buyer," in the language of Hiawatha), who maintains that the poor fellow will work if but time is given to get an observation through his wool, and to pick up his carpet bag and things that have gone astray in the Freedmen's Bureau. My companions met a gentleman of their acquaintance, who, with an associate, had a year ago gone down from Chicago and purchased a sugar plantation of 2,700 acres in the parish of St. Marys, on the west side of the Mississippi. He stated that they had secured and retained labourers during last season, and were satisfied with the result of their experiment. Another gentleman from Chicago has just purchased an extensive plantation in the same neighbourhood. It is, of course, readily apprehended that the labour question between these gentlemen and the labourer is approached as a simple matter of commerce, and without many difficulties that are presented to those who have so long stood in different relations. It may be stated, also, that these gentlemen expressed much contentment with the fine climate and good shooting. and being full of money were probably less exacting in the financial test of the investment. Sugar estates, with buildings and fixtures for work, have been sold as low as $30 per acre, and there are yet many more on the market.

The Custom House (in which is also the Post Office) presents to the street view a magnificent exterior. It is built of Massachusetts granite, nearly square, and about 300 feet on each side, but it terminates, under a temporary flat roof, with the third story, and is quite unfinished within.

A branch mint of the United States is an extensive old

building occupying a fine site, surrounded by trees, near the levee, with some very fine machinery and implements within, and a venerable party in charge, who dolefully informed us that "a printing press makes the money now."

The St. Louis and St. Charles hotels are both fine buildings. The entrance hall of the former presented a spacious stairway, guarded at its base by two well executed lions couchant in marble—a fine rotunda, in the centre of the building, formerly arose from the pavement, but since the decline of business, and of the patronage of the planters and their families, it has been bridged over at the first floor, and the upper portion turned into a refectory. Its lofty interior is finely frescoed with figures illustrative of American history.

The "shell road" extends from the terminus of Canal street to Lake Pont Chartrain, passing for the greater part through a dreary waste of cane swamp, with here and there a grove of small cypresses. It is the very perfection of a road—firm, smooth, and beautifully white, being formed of small shells that are found in banks throughout the many bays and inlets that here form the slight line between sea and land. The lake is a beautiful sheet of salt water, pleasant in its transparency over the white sand and shells, in contrast to the muddy water of the Mississippi. At the end of a long wharf over the shallow beach of the Lake, lay a ferry steamer, connecting with the railway, leading northwards from the opposite shore, and a fine passenger steamer for Mobile.

We called at the St. Charles Hotel (which is centrally situated) yesterday morning, to pay our respects to a young couple on a bridal tour, where we learned something of the manner, and of the common appreciation of an event that occurred in the hotel on the evening of the previous day. A Judge from Texas and a Colonel resident in the city, who had hitherto been friends, met in the great hall of the

hotel, where the Colonel, fired at once by indignation at some imagined want of good faith on the part of his friend, and by too much drink, rushed upon the Judge with an uncourteous epithet and bowie-knife ; whereupon the Judge shot the Colonel dead with a revolver, but not before he had received a serious wound from the knife of the victim. The matter does not appear to cause much remark beyond a general expression of sympathy for the actors in the little "unpleasantness," who, we are told, were both "very fine fellows, and highly honourable, &c.,"—although it is elicited in conversation that the Colonel had been the proprietor of a well-known gambling saloon. As far as I can understand, however, such occurences are now rate in this city.

As we walked home last night to our hotel, gloveless and over-coatless, enjoying the fresh (moonlit) atmosphere, we congratulated ourselves upon the change of climate. This morning we found the shady side of the street most pleasant, and "slowly" the most comfortable rate of progress ; and now, in the middle of the day, we retire to make a note of things, mellow with that glow of kindness to one's kind that comes of being thoroughly warmed up. We have no general news from home for many days, but thrive wonderfully in our state of ignorance, and are doing our very best to enjoy the life of "boys again."

SATURDAY, Feb. 2.

The steamship "Cuba," to leave this evening for Havana, Key West, and Baltimore, lies at the levee. The vessel is trim built, and fairly appointed, to external view—a physical description that applies also to her commander, with the addition of a good humored expression of living humanity. Our party being innocent of machinery, we take on trust the representation of that part of her qualification, and are booked and ticketed for places in her. We take our last dinner at the "St. Louis," with the same good relish as our first,

but mixed with a slight dash of sadness in view of the possibilities of the immediate future, in which we can scarcely hope for a repetition of so good sumptuary care, and bearing with us the most agreeable recollections of our stay in New Orleans, hie us "all aboard."

Letter VII.

Havana, Feb. 6th, 1867.

It was five o'clock of Sunday morning (3rd inst.,) when we left the New Orleans levee, and the weather being fine (though a little fresh) we had a good view of the country extending below the city to the mouth of the Mississippi. The view is soon exhausted, but the great wealth of orange groves, laden with fruit, ripe and growing, is interesting when seen for the first time. As we descend the river, the long extending earth declines first into rice fields and then into marshy land, with vast fields of reeds waving in the breeze; until about 130 miles from New Orleans, about two p.m., we pass through a group of mud banks and snags, dragging heavily over the universal bar—forming everywhere by the soil of the Mississippi—into the gulf of Mexico, and leaving behind us a cluster of the vessels of all nations that were either not so fortunate as ourselves, in being debarred, or otherwise waiting for pilots to guide them through the winding, and constantly varying channel of the river. With accommodation for 70, we carried about 60 passengers, making the vessel not uncomfortably full. We dined (very fairly) upon leaving the bar, and felt a warmer atmosphere as soon as we were fairly at sea. Towards evening the breeze increased, and by dark we had a moderate sea running, and the majority of our sixty immoderately sea-sick. I succumbed to the common fate, but experienced a much milder attack than some of my more robust young friends, and rallied next morning without having felt the despair or *abandon* that is said so often to accompany the attack, but, on the contrary impressed strongly with a sense of the value of human life in general, and the very great value of my own life in

particular. Monday proved a fine day, and the sea having toned down to a pleasant ripple, the passengers began to return to their valued places at the dinner-table, and by Tuesday each mouth was open again to feed. We noticed floating prettily on the waves many "jelly fishes" (or Medusæ), their beautiful discs presenting many and changing colors, from transparent crystal to deep blue and green, as the light reflected from them. The weather was now all that heart of poet or health-seeker could wish; but the Gulf of Mexico is a lonely sea: the trade that had been accumulating up to the breaking out of war, and connecting the interests of all the cities and peoples around its border, has been driven out and much the greater number of vessels carrying it on, having been either active participants in the war or privateers, have been utterly destroyed; so that now even the pork and lard and breadstuffs of the Western States are supplied to Cuba by way of New York, instead of the accustomed channel of the Mississippi and the Gulf. We met on board also parties who have been engaged in trade, and some who have made investments in Mexico, but whose desire now is to get safely out of the country. They state that the hopes once entertained of the establishment of law and order by the Government of Maximilian having been dashed, the country is rapidly sinking again into its accustomed barbarism, and there is no protection for persons or property, and no prospect whatever of speedy improvement. They state that successive detachments of the army of "liberals" intercept the traveller to protect his life and property, by assuming the temporary control of the former, and the lion's share as a toll upon the latter. But this is a lovely sea, and its shores are lands of untold wealth, and neither the cupidity or injustice of man, nor his reckless idleness and profligacy, can long prevent it from becoming busy and cheerful with the industry and enjoyment of living humanity.

Tuesday evening. In the Gulf stream, a soft breeze woos us to the deck, where we lay till midnight, watching the glittering stars and the crescent moon, (lying on her back from this point of view), and the sparkling ripple of the phosphorescent waves from the vessel's side ; but there is an end to all enjoyments on sea and land, and so we turn in—perchance to sleep. Our sleep, however, was rather feverish, and we started up at six o'clock this morning to the announcement from the signal gun on deck that we were passing under the shadow of the Moro Castle into the neat and picturesque basin that forms the harbour of this most picturesque city. The castle is built in grand isolation on the rock that rises perpendicularly from the sea, on the opposite side from the city, of the mouth of the basin, with its great guns and its garrison of Spanish soldiers all to itself. The unlucky vessel, overtaken by nightfall outside of this watch tower, must needs take her chance of weather and the fates, for no mortal craft durst find rest within the haven between sunset and dawn of morning. In accordance with this stringency of rule, our vessel cast anchor in a part of the basin remote from the city, and there must needs discharge her passengers and cargo by means of gondola and lighter. Among our fellow passengers to this city from New Orleans was Capt. McC., (to whose acquaintance we were introduced in the latter city), who has passed thirty years of his life on and about the Gulf, and who appears to have brought to it and retained a vigorous constitution, and that genial and kindly and hearty humor which is the traditional production of his native Green Isle. His flow of spirits formed a valuable element in the compound of good things that made a very pleasant voyage, and his long and varied experience and keenness of observation did us good service on sea and in our introduction to this antique land. Along with our friend, we leave the steamer in charge of Don Juan, Commissary and *Major Domo* (and man of many and varied accomplishments), of the " Hotel

Cubano," (Mrs. Brewer, hostess),—in one of the small skiffs or gondolas that swarmed around us with the same hospitable importunity that hackmen practice on shore. We land and pass through the Custom House, with no more delay than is experienced in crossing any other border, and at a cost of ten cents each to a diminutive creole for handling our trunks. We pass through the narrowest and hardest paved of streets, with eighteen inches wide of side walk on either side, and a gutter in the centre, and by a market place which groaned, or would have groaned if such heavy masses of granite and limestone and stucco, could be vocal, under the burden of vegetables and fruits, more than I can enumerate—tomatoes, pease, lettuce, oranges, and bananas are those that I have fed upon, and in the finest perfection. We pass through the open door and solid stone passage-way into the paved court of our hotel and so upstairs through halls tiled and tesselated to our appropriate rooms on the first floor from the top, (it is but the third from the ground, however,) where the best current of air circulates. The covered galleries forming the passage to our rooms are festooned with creeping plants, and the walls of the Court below are carefully whitewashed and its pavement kept clean by running water. Our windows—they are two—are innocent of glass, and the shutters are open, both together, or alternately, as the wind and sun may favour; and besides the heavy folding door that is pushed in abeyance against the wall, the entrance to our apartment is hung with a curtain which serves to keep out the vulgar gaze, but admits the passage of grateful air, and the red brick tiles are clean and have a pleasant ring in the soft air. The "air bath" enjoyed on the deck of the vessel in these latitudes is a great luxury, but there is no such wealth of physical comfort in the lavatory of her cabin, and we enjoy again the comfort of a tiolet made on shore, and descend to the breakfast-room, where we are glad to obtain places on the gallery or court side of the room, and with

gratitude I write the fact, we fare sumptuously. After breakfast we go to look for letters from home, and have such enjoyment as one feels in a strange land, and *so* strange a land, in an account of all that concerns one most. The streets are crooked and narrow, and in the mixing of nations there appears to be little of the English language diffused, or of any other language than the Spanish. This latter, however, appears to be acquired by the emigrant foreigners with great facility. We pass the fine palace of the Captain-General—its marble fretwork glittering in the bright sun and the garden-square in front, with its luxuriant growth of Royal palm, and its varied profusion of trees and plants. We look into the Cathedral Church of Columbus, (a venerable building,) and at the bust laid in the wall of the chancel, beneath which (it is recorded in brass) the ashes of the the great navigator lie.

Letter VIII.

Havana, February 7, 1867.

After dinner, yesterday, we entered a carriage, and, under the guidance of our friend Don Juan—most eloquent of guides—drove till dark over the finest of roads through a perfect fairy land of garden residences. One of the most extensive, and presenting the finest growth of trees, including the palm in all its varieties, is that of the Captain-General. We drove for several miles along the "Cerro" and intersecting avenues, where are many villas of rare beauty. The low but long-extending houses are, for the most part, built near the street, and are of white marble, or stuccoed over or plastered, all of the same colour, with wide verandahs and many ornaments of column, pilaster, capital and pediment, and coloured glass where that luxury is indulged; and the plants and herbage are everywhere luxuriant. Our guide mentioned the names of several Spanish nobles who are among the owners of these fine residences. As the city is approached there are terraces of dwellings of city merchants and shopkeepers in more or less approximate imitation of the same style, but all pleasant places of retreat. In the groups of men, women and children, (high coloured, mixed, and white) about the verandahs and porticos, and on the street or sidewalk, we observed the uniform expansion and glow of the children of the sun. Even some bands of the Captain-General's "children" (*pets* one might say) who were at work on the highways, or marching home at the close of the day, with iron straps over their trousers, and under care of fellows bearing carbines in rest, appeared to take their cigarettes and their jokes with much zest. Returning to our hotel by gaslight, we notice the brilliancy

and high decoration of the shops—all exhibiting the existence of wealth and good taste.

In the evening we visited the "Paseo Isabel Secunda," a park in course of extension from the end of the sea wall, opposite the Moro Castle, far into that part of the city lying without the old walls. The length of the Park is now, I should think, at least a mile, a great part of which is planted with grass and trees and fountains ; and all, with the gravel walks, are kept in the finest condition. Here a military band discoursed fine airs from eight till nine o'clock, p.m., to a vast crowd, who sat or promenaded in all the ease and enjoyment of perpetual summer. After the music, we visited a bazaar that was held for the benefit of an hospital, in a large tent, ordinarily used as a circus. On shelves improvised for the occasion, were exhibited a great number of fancy articles, mostly of little value, that were to be disposed of by lot. The beauty and fashion of Havana (in full, or very short at top, dress,) sat in groups around small tables, where they piled up the specie produce of sales of little screws of paper (like pipe lighters) that represented the lottery tickets, and which, of course, were laden, besides the possibility of a prize, with the untold riches derived from the smling approval of the vendors. Being unappreciative of this kind of scrip, we left without having made any investment. We looked into "El Louvre," a very extensive saloon adjoining the Opera House, and were inducted into the popular art of the "panella," a sweet drink, which appeared to afford mild solace to a large crowd of imbibers.

To-day we visited the iron-clad war steamer "Tetuan," said to be of 6,000 tons burthen. Her great hull did not present any lines of beauty. We were told that there were 36 feet in depth of it under water. Her 1,100 men were enjoying their dinner, and her many guns were old fashioned and harmless. We visited also the "Gerona," a very handsome vessel of moderate size, and we noticed, besides these

two, several war steamers in the harbour. We met, in one of the narrow streets, a regiment of soldiers, who, with their band, were apparently out for a march. The officers and men are handsome fellows—the latter remarkably so—and neat and tidy in their light linen costume, and all young fellows. They appeared to be men of lighter weights than the men of the British Army. They are every one natives of Spain; no native of Cuba serves in the army in any rank, nor fills any office under Government.

The Opera House is a prominent feature on the "Paseo Isabel," and the Cubans are noted lovers of music. The building is very large, and admirably adapted for its uses. The climate requires a well ventilated building, and wide halls and airy corridors are provided with less difficulty where no provision is necessary against changing seasons. The parquette is extensive, and arranged with easy seats and convenient of access, and there are five tiers of galleries. When we visited it (this evening) three of those tiers, as well as the parquette, were filled with a most respectable and appreciative audience. The display of fine clothes and jewellery was, of course, imposing; the gentleman, as well the ladies, were well got up, and paid close attention to the performance. The opera (*Norma*) was put upon the stage apparently faultless, and the singing and acting were both very fine. The Captain-General, with some members of his staff, occupied the Royal box, and we estimated that the audience numbered about three thousand.

The *volante* is a peculiar style of carriage, a sort of gig upon two wheels, the springs supplemented by long shafts of elastic wood: in the forward part of which the mule or pony is ridden by the postillion driver. In those owned by private parties two horses (tandem fashion) are generally used, and in these cases the postillion is also a peculiar object—always more or less "coloured," and gorgeous, in silver or gilded jacket and jack-boots. Horses are used only

for carriages, mules and bullocks doing the heavy work. The mules are laden with great burdens upon pack saddles (the saddles of a weight for which no reasonable account appears), and when marching in a long file to market fill a large part of the narrow street. The bullocks are used in carts in hauling lumber, stone, gravel for the roads, and heavy material generally, and are very fine animals. The "tackle" of all the beasts of burden, including the horses used in the public *volantes*, is very cumbrous and oppressive. The native horses are small of size, but well shaped and clean limbed, and we noticed some very handsome private carriages and most complete in all their appointments; the higest style have white coachmen and outriders. The lottery ticket seller is here a nuisance, as importunate and all-pervading as the hurdy-gurdy in some parts. His scream, as he shakes out his sheet of mottled and figured *coupons* to the breeze, is heard at earliest morn and latest eve.

Among the features that link the city with antiquity is the *Watchman*, a guardian of the Dogberry type, without the slightest "modern improvement"—whose pikestaff and leathern helmet are dimly revealed by the traditional lantern, and whose gentle bray resounds in your ear, turning the current of your dreams at each half hour of the night, and indicating, if you understand Spanish, that "all's well."

A paternal government provides all things needful for the Cubans:—rulers, and ministers of every degree, soldiers, watchmen, parks and highways, as well as music and "sports and pastimes." Here is no vexed question of suffrage, or right of way, or individual liberty resounding from stump or legislative hall; there is not even a municipal government for the practice of native talent. There appears to prevail, however, a marvellous contentment; good humour rings in the jocund laugh of the muleteer and bullock driver, and carrier of burdens, as it beams from the pleasant faces of the middle and higher classes. This may

perhaps be attributed, in some measure, to the climate, and it is quite possible that there may exist the desire, as there exists without doubt the capacity, for some measure of self-government.

The mixed chorus of watchmen, and dogs, and parrots, and cocks, (that seem to think it morning all night long) is rather repellent of sleep, as we lie under guazy mosquito curtains (not needless in this month of February) and the lightest of linen covers. There is exemption from these disturbers, and there is fresh air, from land and sea, in the many fine hostelries in the suburbs and neighbourhood of the city. I propose, however, to take refuge on board the steamer "Cuba," that leaves again to-morrow morning for Baltimore, and must needs coax a little sleep.

Letter IX.

On Board the Steamship "Cuba,"
Feb. 8, 1867.

We made an early start this warm morning, and before seven o'clock saw our worldly effects safely perched on the heads of two negro porters, who walked so erectly to the quay under their burdens that I make a note of the value of this sort of exercise in imparting strength to the spine and to the muscular system, and recommend it to youthful gymnasts. Taking our places under the canopy of one of the long line of gondolas, we were soon on the deck of the "Cuba," and by nine o'clock we hear the welcome sound of the whistle to move on. In a few minutes we are disengaged from the fleet around us, and taking a last look at the beautiful basin, and the white houses and green trees of Havana, all serene in the soft sunlight, and passing rapidly (with ring of saluting gun) by the solid walls of the castle, we plunge into the Gulf stream. This rapid transition from the always placid harbour is not always so agreeable as upon this fine morning, for when there is a sea running one is apt to plunge rapidly into a state of sea-sickness; this morning, however, we merely pass into a fresh atmosphere that is exhilarating, and gives us a better taste for breakfast after our long morning a-foot and afloat. We make directly for Key West, where we arrive about five p.m.—eighty miles from Havana. As we approach the low island (about six miles in length,) Fort Taylor looms up, a solid structure, presenting two tiers of guns in its wall, and mounted on top by a number of "Parrots" and "Columbiads" (we are told) of formidable appearance. At a point of the Island, about four miles distant, are two huge Martello towers in

course of construction. Among our fellow passengers are two military officers who have been stationed with their battalion of soldiers sole occupants of the lonely reef, at Tortugas for nearly two years, and are now returning from their first visit of two months to the abodes of men. Tortugas bank is about sixty miles from Key West, within the Gulf, and the ordinary communication is by means of a yacht in which the passage is made to and from this place. Here the only regular means of access to the wide world is confined to the calls of the steamers of this and another line, about once a week. The officers tell us that their dreary rock of coral is a healthy place, and that in the warmest weather they can count surely upon the return of a refreshing breeze after a few hours of calm. Lying on the reef, at a distance of a mile or two from the pier, we noticed a fine Clyde-built steamer (the "Pearl") that had been a blockade runner, or at least was claimed as such by the American Government, but the claim was denied by the owners, and having got ashore here, she lies between the claimants (each too careless or uncertain to take charge of her), to rust out. The town and port of Key West is built on the covering of sand that has accumulated upon the coral reef, and is of course but a very few feet above the sea. It is subject to the scorching heat of the sun, but made tolerable by the sea breeze. Palms, almond trees, fig trees, oleanders, (in full bloom and flower), and roses and other flowering plants, are here in their finest condition. With the exception, however, of a few vegetables, the sand does not produce any food. The population is about three thousand—besides soldiers in the fort, and men on the works. There is some little industry practised in the collection of sponges and corals, and some attempt has been made to manufacture salt; but the principal dependence of the three thousand is upon the commerce of the sea, partly in the supplying of vessels, as our vessel is now being supplied, with fish and water and

vegetables, but more profitably, it is said, in the business of wrecking. For practice in this latter calling, the vast and varying formation of coral reefs presents unusual facilities. In our ramble on shore we discovered the local habitation, placed and named, for the first time, of the Freedmen's Bureau—A. Patterson, Agent. Being late in the day, and the office being closed, we saw none of the dusky subjects of that much-abused, and sometimes highly-lauded, paternal institution. Besides this important trust, "A. Patterson" advertises also the double profession of auctioneer and notary public—a plurality of offices that is disagreeably suggestive of monopoly, and of evil significance to the unlucky owner whose vessel should stray among these keys. But "A. Patterson" is mortal and incomplete, and must needs divide the power of Key West with "J. Dixon," who keeps a variety store—a sort of commercial head centre, in fact. After waiting for nearly an hour for this latter imposing personage, whose first duty was apparently to place some needed supplies on board the steamer, we were admitted to his den, where the piling in sweet (or odorous) confusion of shells, sponges, sea feathers, corals, turtles, and snakes, with parrots and cats, and barrels of oil, and rusty chains, and tackle, and cordage, is made more or less interesting, according to the time and temper at one's command, by the haste and crutiness of the *commercant*, who has been crystallized by circumstances into a monopolist. Being short of time, though, of course in excellent supply of temper, we were obliged each to make a hasty selection of a souvenir, and run for the steamer. It is but justice to Key West to say that we noticed one witness of the existence, or visitation, of human feeling, in a granite column, erected but not yet uncovered, in a small square, apparently from the ornament of an anchor, visible through the tattered covering, in honor of some brave navigator.

Leaving Key West, we swing round into the Gulf stream,

and meet a fresher breeze, and, being tired after a long day on deck and ashore, I turn in and sleep the sleep of childhood, and am revenged of all the noisy ones of Havana.

Saturday, Feb. 9th.

A bright morning, with the breath of the sunny South gushing more freely ; the waves are prettily capped, and our ship making all the headway that steam and sail can give her, and some passengers talking meekly (and some meekly expressive without speech) of being a little squeamish. At noon we are in latitude 26½ N., off the long coast of Florida and the Bahamas. About two p.m. the wind increases, and produces rude and ungraceful movement of crockery and glassware, interrupting our innocent endeavours to feed. By dark the rolling of the ship is decidedly unpleasant, and at midnight there is a heavy jar and a sudden stopping of the engine, and a corresponding increase in the rolling movement, for the crank pin of our engine has broken off short, and we are helplessly "rocked in the cradle of the deep," for the wind is now N.E., dead ahead, and our last bit of canvas has been taken down.

Sunday, Feb. 20th.

The "noisy ones" had us last night, and we are all a-weary and long of face this morning. It is a day of unrest for the ship, and for all on board. The ladies and children have concluded that "they want to go home," as one of 'em expresses it, and it is probable that if there were solid earth for a way the sterner men would follow. Providentially there is a spare crank pin on board, and the four engineers go to work to fit it, but make slow progress, owing to the rolling of the ship. There is no storm, however, but only what the sailors term a "wholesale breeze."

We find the advantage of sailing with an experienced and good tempered commander, who dispenses kind words

along with the official assurance that there is no real danger to be feared; and by eight o'clock, p.m., we were again under way, and all feeling "much better."

Monday, Feb. 11.

The "wholesale breeze" continues, but we are making progress, and have got our sea-legs (and stomach) and bear our lot more bravely.

Tuesday, Feb. 12.

The wind has moderated a little this morning. At noon we are in latitude 33.

Wednesday, Feb. 13.

Some of our passengers, who are weary of the sea, got up at four o'clock this morning to see the light on Cape Hatteras, the extreme seaward point of a sand bank, many miles long, off the coast of North Carolina, and outside of Pamlico Sound. We saw but one sail since leaving Key West, and no other sign of life, save an occasional gull and a few flying fishes—a small fish that skips from one wave crest to another on gauzy wings. We are now out of the Gulf stream, and the atmosphere has lost the genial softness that prevailed through all the changes of weather. We meet here and there a vessel, and about eight p.m. pass Cape Henry, and discern a light from Fortress Monroe.

Thursday, Feb. 14.

We wake to find ourselves half way up Chesapeake Bay, a beautiful inland sea, lying (throughout) on a bed of oysters, said to be the "finest in the world," and for the privilege of raking which a moderate revenue is derived by the State of Maryland. We see the capital (Annapolis) which lies prettily upon an inlet, at the mouth of which are a number of national vessels. We now meet a good deal of floating ice, and a great number of vessels that have been

ice-bound in the harbour of Baltimore for a fortnight, until gradually released during the last few days. After an hour of patient (or impatient) watching for the arrival of a Customs officer, who, like the god of Ahab, "either is talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or, peradventure, sleepeth, and must be awaked," but who, unlike the myth god, does eventually appear, and "put us through," we land in the monumental city, and are carried to Barnum's hotel.

Letter X.

Washington, Feb. 18, 1867.

Notwithstanding the curious illusion through which I awoke several times during my two first nights ashore to imagine myself rocking violently, I believe it was no such thing, and, for the use of sleeping, would, with honest Counsellor Gonzalo, exchange "a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre (or much less) of barren ground." The faithful companions of my journey from Chicago to Baltimore took the first train homewards after our arrival in port, and left that fair city to two days' rain "and to me." On Sunday morning (17th) the sun came forth to gild its marble and other beauties, and the sound of church going bells fell sweetly through the clear atmosphere upon ears, hardened by four consecutive Sundays' experience of the rude pipe of sailors and coalheavers, and the motley crowd of the Mississippi that are called "deck-hands." The situation of Baltimore, upon finely rolling ground, near the head of Chesapeake Bay, is peculiarly favourable. The marble column and statue, erected by the State of Maryland in honour of General Washington, is the finest that I have seen of the many memorials of the "father of his country," and is set in a park beautifully situated upon a little hill-top, covered with the purest green, and untrodden by foot of man; whilst the unity and sacredness of the association is preserved by the scrupulously clean streets and fine buildings surrounding the park.

This (Monday) morning opened fair and mild—as warm, in fact, as need be for the convenience of one who harbours the common northern prejudice in favour of clothes, and I took an early train for this stirring capital. I found the

hotel of my choice (Willard's) so completely filled that I must needs wait (till 6 p.m.) the departure of a guest before I could obtain a room, and then, by the "sweat of my brow," (in addition to the little premium of five dollars per diem,) in ascending to the fourth floor. There is, moreover, a second bed in the small sized room; but I have a proper guarantee from the obliging clerk for the judicious selection of my necessary room-mate. There is everywhere a great crowd, and all consuming haste and pressure, and an alarming circulation of tobacco juice—in fact, but for the moral necessity of "doing" the capital, I should say that Washington is not a place to be desired to sojourn in. The "magnificent distances" of Washington is a characteristic that is promptly conceded by the stranger. The city is a huge skeleton of the Mastodon and Megatherium sort, very much in want of feeding up. The poor looking shops and shabby-genteel boarding and public houses that partially occupy the wide spaces between the far apart public buildings are made but more disagreeably conspicuous by the fine natural position. I visited both Houses of Congress, remaining for an hour in the gallery of the Senate, and hearing some debates; but the business was mostly of routine nature. I remained but a few minutes at the door of one of the galleries of the House of Representatives, that popular arena being much crowded by eager listeners to the debate on the "Bill for the Military Government of the Rebel States." The "freedmen" are, of course, much interested in these debates, and their presence in the galleries (where the "suffrage is universal") is no doubt a natural consequence, but I presume it is one of those good consequences that require practice to make them appreciated. The "Honourable House" makes a respectable appearance, mainly distinguishable from the Senate by the loudness of the oratory.

Tuesday, Feb. 19.

The building known as the "Patent Office" is one of the most conspicuous in Washington, occupying a fine site in the centre of the city. Upon ascending its massive steps, and passing through a fine portico, all in marble, the visitor enters on a long walk through lofty rooms and galleries, filled with "Yankee notions," and little models of great inventions, said (by the hand book) to be "most interesting to the stranger." I did not find it so, and thought it quite possible that, on the contrary, many other "strangers" might consider the show of furniture quite inferior to the style of the building. Nor was my admiration challenged by a collection of curiosities—the gifts of Oriental potentates—and some national relics of supposed national interest, all of which, I fancy, could be readily out-matched by Barnum.

Looming up in the distance across the "Tiber" is the building of the Smithsonian Institution. The "Mall" in which it stands is promised to be a fine park when it is finished. On reaching the building one finds, without, a plentiful supply of red sandstone in a fine "Romanesque" style (so the book says); within is a museum, occupying one hundred feet in length, or possibly a few feet more (out of the four hundred and fifty feet in length of the building,) and containing on the ground floor and galleries a good collection of specimens in natural history and minerals. A few works of art, of the quality that are usually the gifts or advertising media of poor artists, adorn the sides of a small corridor; and that is all—for the public at least. I was told that the library had been removed to the capitol, and there were indications that the building had suffered from fire, two years ago, one of the keepers said.

The Treasury building is also a very fine block of white marble, but, like the Patent Office, it is a place for use, and the effect of its fine colonnade and porticoes is lost and

forgotten when one enters the convenient and useful, but comparatively small, rooms of the interior.

The capitol, in its design and execution (and it is nearly complete) and in the fullness and fitness of all its parts, is in correspondence with its uses, and with the pretensions of its owners. Leaving the Treasury building, or Willard's Hotel, and looking along the low lying mile and a half (or thereabouts) of Pennsylvania Avenue to the magnificent building, all in purest white marble, whose dome looms about four hundred feet (it rises three hundred feet from the elevated ground on which it stands) above you at the end of the view, you may readily imagine, as I did, that you can reach it by an easy walk; but having walked in the sun heat until you find yourself becoming tired, and yet some distance from the capitol, you may perhaps decide, as I did, that you will ride, and find yourself in better case for viewing the premises. The best general view is by this approach, with the ascending slope of the finely planted park between you and the building as you enter the gate, but the finest part of the building is the opposite (or east) front, where a grand uniformity prevails in the great flights of ascending steps, and the long line of columns. There are several well executed figures in marble in the main portico, designed from incidents of American history, and two fine figures representing respectively Peace and War, in niches in the wall; and in the pediment of the portico of the north wing (on this front) is a fine group representing America "as it was" and "as it is." Designed before the late war, the latter part of the group represents exclusively the arts and occupations of Peace, and the stranger who to-day passes inwards to the Senate chamber is in danger of having his pleasing and peaceful impressions rudely dispelled.

The dome, when lighted up at night, forms a huge lantern, visible all over the city, and no doubt far beyond, on the heights of Georgetown and the banks of the Potomac.

Entering the building, the rotunda, ninety-six feet in diameter, forms the great central hall, and is ornamented with a number of works of art in painting and statuary, as are also the wide corridors leading to the wings, right and left, in whichare the halls of the Senate and of the House of Representatives. These halls are covered with glass ceilings, lightly colored, above which are placed a great number of jets ofgas, that diffuse through the halls and galleries a soft and uniform and very agreeable light. Among the works of art, the representation in fresco on the walls of the stair hall leading to the gallery of the House of Representatives, of the backwoods life and progress of the emigrant, is worthy of special notice.

February 20th.

I had intended to have made "a few remarks" on the men and acts of Congress, now so active and exciting; but I find the men and acts vexed and uncertain, and have decided to consult my ease and reputation by letting them alone. I heartily wish the nation "better times," and close these Notes.